



5309 Shilshole Avenue NW  
Suite 200  
Seattle, WA 98107  
206.789.9658 phone  
206.789.9684 fax

www.adolfson.com

July 24, 2008

Ms. Linda Ritter  
Associate Planner  
City of Mukilteo  
4480 Chennault Beach Road  
Mukilteo WA 98275

**Subject: Hi-Tech Properties - 44<sup>th</sup> Ave West Site Wetland Determination**

Dear Ms. Ritter:

ESA Adolfson (Adolfson) reviewed the wetland determination conducted by Wetland Resources, Inc. for the High-Tech Properties site on 44<sup>th</sup> Ave West. The property consists of three tax parcels (0061160000-9700, -9701, and -9800), which have a total area of approximately 6.7 acres.

The purpose of this review was to provide technical comment on the determination made by Wetland Resources that wetland areas occurring on the site are exempt from regulation under the Mukilteo Municipal Code (MMC). Materials reviewed include:

1. Wetland Determination Report for Hi-Tech Properties, Wetland Resources, Inc., May 5, 2008.
2. Geotechnical Investigation Hi-Tech Properties Building, Nelson Geotechnical, Inc. August 22, 2001.
3. Revised Sensitive Areas Studies and Conceptual Mitigation Plan, Pacific International Engineering, June 13, 2000. (*This report is for the property to the north of the subject property*).

**Site Conditions**

I met with you and representatives of the property owner and Wetland Resources on the site on July 1, 2008 to review site conditions. The subject property is forested and is surrounded on all sides by developed lots and roads. The site is comprised of three parcels, one to the east and two to the west. I observed a narrow band of wetland area oriented in a north-to-south direction on the eastern parcel. The two western parcels are at a slightly higher elevation than the eastern parcel and vegetation and soil conditions were characteristic of upland (i.e., non-wetland) areas. I did not observe surface water at any point within the eastern parcel, but I did observe one area with surface saturation near the south end of the parcel. Also, indicators of recent surface ponding (water lines on shrubs and sediment deposits) were apparent at the far north end of the eastern parcel.

The soil on the north end of the eastern parcel, where indicators of surface ponding were observed, was gravelly sandy loam with no observable organic content. The soil on the south end of the parcel was a silt loam and appeared to have some partially decomposed organic content within the top 12 inches at some locations. The dominant plant species were hydrophytic, or indicative of wetland conditions, throughout much of the eastern parcel. Common plants include black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*) and Douglas spiraea (*Spiraea douglasii*). Small-fruited bulrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*) and



Linda Ritter / Hi-Tech Properties – 44<sup>th</sup> Street Site  
July 24, 2008  
Page 2

mannagrass (*Glyceria* sp.) was common in one area near the south end of the parcel. Following a walk of the site it was decided that a second meeting would be necessary and that the representatives of the property owners would provide additional documents describing historic uses of the site and the City would provide any available wetland or drainage documents for adjacent parcels. The second meeting was conducted at City Hall on July 22, 2008.

### **Wetland Determination Report**

The Wetland Determination Report provided by Wetland Resources shows that areas containing wetland indicators exist on the site, but that the areas would not be regulated under the MMC because artificial drainage has been directed to the site and land alterations on parcels to the north and east have prevented surface flows from leaving the site. The report contains a summary of the site drainage history, including two Critical Areas Reconnaissance Reports (prepared in 2001 and 2003 by The Watershed Company, a 2001 memo from the City Planning Department agreeing with the conclusions of the 2001 Watershed Company report, and a 1991 memo from the City Public Works Department regarding drainage problems on the site. The drainage history summary illustrates that incomplete development of the Quadrant Business Park to the south from 1979 through 1981 resulted in surface runoff from parking lots being directed onto the subject property. The construction of a berm east of the property in 1989 and the construction of a portion of 80<sup>th</sup> Street along the north side of the property in 1997 resulted in surface water impoundment on the site. The Wetland Resources report concludes that the wetland areas on the site were created following the artificial drainage directed to the site and the improper construction of 80<sup>th</sup> Street which included raising the elevation of the culvert by approximately two feet, and therefore are exempt from regulation under MMC 17.52B.040(2).

### **Comments**

Base on the site conditions we observed on July 1, 2008, small areas (less than 1/4 acre) on the eastern parcel (00611600009700) meet the state and federal requirements for wetland as per the Ecology 1998 manual and Corps 1987 manual. All three parameters, including hydric soil, hydrophytic or wetland vegetation, and the evidence of standing water or saturated soils are present in these areas. However, based upon the documents provided by Wetland Resources and the City, we feel it is reasonable to conclude that the wetland areas on the eastern parcel may be the result of the redirection of stormwater to the site and the impoundment of the water due to construction of 80<sup>th</sup> Street. With the exception of one area on the south end of the site, the soils within the wetlands did not contain observable concentrations of organic matter. Because the wetlands have mineral soils with little organic accumulation it is possible that wetlands may not have existed on this site prior to the hydrologic alterations discussed above.

Further evidence that wetland conditions may not have been present until recent years is the determination made by The Watershed Company following site visits in 2001 and 2003. Data sheets from their February 2001 site visit show that they observed surface saturation at only one sample plot (#5) near the south end of the site. Additionally, the 2001 geotechnical report shows that shallow groundwater seepage was relatively deep on the site; at one location seepage was recorded at 1.5 feet below the surface but at all other locations the depth to shallow groundwater was from two to ten feet.



Linda Ritter / Hi-Tech Properties – 44<sup>th</sup> Street Site  
July 24, 2008  
Page 3

The plants growing in the wetland areas are all wetland tolerant but are at a relatively young growth stage and so may have established during the eleven years since surface flows were disrupted by construction of 80<sup>th</sup> Street.

We agree that the documentation of drainage history and past Critical Areas Studies provided by Wetland Resources shows that the wetland area on the eastern parcel may have been created as a result of alterations in site hydrology (including the construction of 80<sup>th</sup> Street) and would therefore be exempt from regulation under MMC 17.52B.040(2). Please note that this determination is based upon information provided by the applicant and pertains only to the Mukilteo Municipal Code and exemptions therein. This determination does not extend to state or federal wetland definitions or regulatory authority. We recommend that the applicant coordinate with Washington State Department of Ecology and US Army Corps of Engineers regulatory staff to determine the requirements for wetlands at the state and federal levels, respectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this review. If you have any questions, please contact me at (206) 789-9658.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael Muscari', written in a cursive style.

Michael Muscari, PWS  
Senior Wetland/Plant Ecologist